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Tuesday, 11 June 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Briens
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Kim Sook
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	Togo	Mr. M'Beou
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jamal Benomar, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Jamal Benomar.

Mr. Benomar (*spoke in Arabic*): Yemen is in the throes of its transition. A few days ago, I sat beside President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, to witness the 565 representatives to the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) celebrate the halfway mark of their deliberations with the launch of their second plenary session. The representatives came from all the country's major political groups, including women and young people, and together they are shaping the future of their country. In a country awash with arms and a history of conflict, such an inclusive dialogue is a great achievement. It demonstrates the Yemeni people's commitment to choosing dialogue over violence and consensus over division.

But Sunday's sad incident shows that the transition is delicate. I regret to inform the Council that a clash erupted between security forces and Ansar Allah demonstrators outside the National Security Bureau in Sana'a, resulting in several deaths and dozens of injuries. Yemen is nonetheless the only country in the region to emerge from the cycle of violence with a negotiated peace agreement that includes a clear road map and timeline for a broad-based democratic transition. The Government and people of Yemen are to be congratulated for standing by their words despite the challenges, and we urge them to stay the course.

Over the past few weeks, the representatives have split up into nine working groups to discuss the major issues facing the country, including the long-standing conflicts between North and South. As may be expected with such diverse and varied groups, which include political opponents and even enemies, it has been difficult to surmount injuries and grievances, and good will has been tested. There are still deep divisions in the working groups, such as those on Sa'ada and the South. They require careful facilitation and a demonstration of the greatest possible good will on all sides.

I am pleased to report, however, that progress has been made overall. The majority of the working groups have submitted their reports to the second plenary session. More than 100 recommendations, many involving constitutional human rights guarantees, have been submitted for adoption. Despite the deep divisions in the Sa'ada group, it has succeeded in arriving at a consensus on the roots of the conflict. Going forward, the representatives will still have to reach a consensus on some major issues, including the structure of the State, the system of Government and the issues regarding the South and Sa'ada. That work will be substantially assisted by the recent establishment of the National Dialogue Consensus Committee, tasked with harmonizing and reconciling the various recommendations and assisting in the reaching of consensus.

My team and other contributors have been working closely with the Conference bodies to share the full range of international experience, expertise and facilitation. While we have no recipe for resolving Yemen's many challenges, sharing comparative experiences from other country situations has enabled the representatives to make more informed decisions as they explore different options. The next and final session of the plenary and working groups will be critical to reaching agreement on the principles and main contours of a future Constitution.

I am pleased to note that the Dialogue is extending well beyond the Conference. Men and women in Yemen are engaged in discussions and debates about the problems of their country and its possible future. People are participating in seminars, round tables and open tents put up in town squares. Developments within the National Dialogue Conference working groups are discussed daily in television and radio programmes, newspapers and new media. In the past few weeks, the working groups have begun their outreach to citizens across various parts of the country. Collectively, they have visited 18 governorates and spoken to over 12,500

people of all ages and backgrounds, including members of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, labour unions, and women's and youth groups.

On one of my visits, a woman told me that my presence had broken the wall of fear. In 2011, it would have been unthinkable for a delegation comprised of women and young people to be welcomed at the headquarters of an intelligence agency. As President Mansour has remarked, we are engaged in more than a political transition; we are witnessing a transformation of the political culture.

The National Dialogue that is now under way will be followed by a constitution-drafting process. The Government of Yemen is committed to making the process fully transparent and inclusive. The new Constitution will be confirmed by a referendum, followed by general elections for a new Government that will enjoy full popular legitimacy. We understand that there are no guarantees for what lies ahead. It is an undertaking of great hope in a fragile environment, where a range of perspectives and diverse interests are seeking to realize a new and better order.

National Dialogue will need to find a consensual settlement to the question of the South in order to develop the foundations of a new Constitution. That is being addressed by a dedicated working group with a specific composition weighted in favour of the southern movement, Hiraak. They will soon begin to debate proposals on the status of the South and a new State structure for Yemen. Yet some Hiraak remain outside the process. In its first plenary, the NDC called for a committee to be set up to reach out to southern leaders. It is important for that to occur.

In the South, the streets are heating up. The resentment pent up during more than two decades of unaddressed grievances and systematic marginalization is reaching a tipping point. Southerners have grown wary of promises unmet. Since February, there has been a significant increase in the frequency and number of demonstrators pouring into the streets. Organized acts of civil disobedience have been observed weekly, sometimes resulting in injuries and deaths. The establishment of two commissions to address the unlawful or illegitimate seizure of property and unjust dismissals from the military and civil services was an important first step in addressing main grievances. The two commissions are collecting complaints and related submissions, but they need far greater resources to accomplish their tasks and deliver effective remedies. Moreover, without further confidence-building measures by the Government or tangible improvement in people's daily lives, the voices of discontent will grow louder, narrowing the space for dialogue.

It goes without saying that the only peaceful route to progress of any kind is through open dialogue and, most importantly, by addressing the legacy of the past. The Government has yet to meet its obligation to establish a commission of inquiry into the events of 2011 or adopt a law on transitional justice. Only with critical steps like those can Yemenis ensure a path to national reconciliation and embrace a new Yemen. Unfortunately, the partisan war continues to play out in the media. Misinformation, fabrication and incitement to violence are rife. It is time for politicians to stop instrumentalizing the media. A media truce is badly needed.

Other serious challenges weigh heavily on the transition. The security situation remains fragile in many parts of the country. Despite all efforts to counter Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, it remains a lethal threat. Most recently, Al-Qaida has been trying to establish a foothold in Hadramawt, with a view to retaking control of that region. Despite the progress made in the political process, there is ongoing instability. Arms continue to be smuggled into Yemen, although several shipments were recently intercepted. Key political factions remained armed and appear to be massing more weapons.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues unabated, with more than half of Yemen's population in need of humanitarian assistance in terms of food, health care, safe water and sanitation, and more than 1 million children suffer from acute malnutrition. Meanwhile, as stability has improved, 90 per cent of those displaced by fighting in southern Yemen have returned to their homes. In northern Yemen, however, prospects for the return of 300,000 internally displaced persons remain poor, and their basic needs are acute. Despite the gravity of the situation, the humanitarian response plan is only 30 per cent funded to date.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, the political transition in Yemen continues largely on course. The electoral commission has already begun preparations for the electoral process, including steps to create a new biometric voter registry. Registration is scheduled to begin in September. The timeline leaves

no room for any delays. In order to ensure the success of the electoral and voter registration process, close cooperation and coordination will be critical among the political parties, the donor community and the Government. Political parties of the former opposition have expressed concern that local authorities, most governors, security chiefs and electoral staff were all appointed under the former regime and are linked to the former ruling party. Members of the former opposition are demanding that action be taken to build confidence in the electoral process. On the other hand, General People's Congress leaders are opposed to any change in appointments, which they view as contrary to the GCC initiative.

Critical steps have been taken to restructure the armed forces. Many of the military commanders who played major roles in the violent clashes of 2011 have been removed from their posts or reassigned outside of the military. A new structure for the military is being implemented, including the establishment of seven military regions. Both the Republican Guard and the First Armoured Division have been dissolved and their units integrated into the new regional structure. Despite these substantial moves, much remains to be done to ensure the professionalization of the armed forces.

Let us make no mistake — there are those who wish to undermine the transition. Sabotage attacks on electricity lines have increased, causing misery and anger throughout the country. Families are being plunged into darkness and unbearable heat. I have witnessed people's resulting frustration, exhaustion and increasing anger. Last week, I spoke to many people in the city of Hudaydah, which has seen frequent protests in recent months. There and in many parts around the country, patience is wearing thin. Attacks on oil and gas pipelines also continue. The interruption of Yemen's energy exports and constant repairs of its electricity lines are costing Yemen hundreds of millions of dollars. While the perpetrators of the sabotage are said to be known, impunity prevails. The people of Yemen are demanding justice. Those responsible for these crimes must be brought to account.

In all my consultations with political leaders, I have reiterated that the only way to a peaceful, stable and prosperous Yemen is through the National Dialogue and the transition process. All Yemenis have a solemn responsibility to advance their legitimate interests and aspirations through the process, in line with relevant Security Council resolutions and the Transition Agreement.

Yemenis have embarked on an extraordinary course based on an agreed road map. They deserve to be supported and are counting on the international community, especially the Council, to fully understand the importance of continuing to accompany them through the entire transition process, to meet the challenges and to deliver all available political and financial support. Perhaps the most important ingredient for a successful transition is the persistence of all those involved. Experience shows that there is no off-the-shelf recipe, perfect formula or predestined outcome. Yemen is its own unique country and its people have their own rich history and complex dimensions.

A new dynamic is emerging in Yemen with the new inclusive politics. The cooperation of all Yemeni factions is critical, and this cooperation is not always forthcoming. In tackling its own difficult political situation, Yemen needs all the support of its friends. Unfortunately, despite substantial pledges of financial contributions through the Friends of Yemen process, so far very little of that has materialized in actual transfers, outside of the significant Saudi contribution. In that regard, I would like to pay tribute to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It has been the largest contributor and the first to deliver. I hope others will follow suit. This is the time to help Yemen by delivering on pledges and supporting the transition in every way. On the Government side, key reforms need to be completed as envisaged in the Mutual Accountability Framework.

Yemen remains a priority for the Secretary-General, and I will remain fully engaged with all sides to assist them along the way. I commend President Mansour for his leadership and the efforts of the Government of National Reconciliation led by Prime Minister Basendwah. The Yemeni people are counting on the Security Council to continue speaking in one voice in support of the transition.

I commend the contributions and support of the Gulf Cooperation Council. In addition, I want to thank the European Union, the Friends of Yemen and the active diplomatic community in Sana'a. Together, we must do everything possible to ensure that the progress we have seen in the National Dialogue and other areas will lead to meaningful changes in security, governance and development, and to concrete improvements in the lives of all Yemenis towards a more peaceful, stable,

democratic and prosperous future in which human rights are protected by the rule of law. The Yemeni people are demonstrating that they deserve no less.

The President: I thank Mr. Benomar for his important and comprehensive briefing this morning.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Sallal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, it gives me pleasure to congratulate your friendly country, the United Kingdom, on its assumption of the presidency of the Council this month. We are confident that you will conduct the work of the Council with skill and wisdom. We would also like to thank Ambassador Kodjo Menan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Togo to the United Nations, for his able conduct of the work of the Council last month.

Yemen has come a long way on the path to a political settlement, based on the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, as well as resolutions 2014 (2011) and 2051 (2012). The National Dialogue Conference, launched on 18 March, represents the cornerstone of the settlement and the only way to addresses all the different and important issues and to form the new Yemen. The Conference has achieved great progress over the past few months, in spite of the difficulties it has faced, thanks to the wise leadership of His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour and his active follow-up to the work of the Conference. The achievements to date are a source of optimism and augur well for the future. Transparency, frankness and understanding prevailed among all the different parties that met at the same table for the first time, putting the interests of the country before all else.

The first plenary of the Conference was successfully held from 18 March to 3 April. The most important accomplishments were the establishment of the nine main working groups to address the different issues at hand, which have prepared work plans and conducted field visits to meet with various entities and citizens to learn of their concerns with a view to promoting the widest possible social participation.

The second plenary began on Saturday, 8 June, under the presidency of President Mansour, 80 days after the launch of the Conference in March. This session will continue for a month and will be devoted to discussing the preliminary reports prepared by the nine working groups established by the National Dialogue Conference in April to address the nine main national issues: the issue of the South, the Sa'ada issue, transitional justice, State-building, good governance, the restructuring of the army and security, the independence of the various institutions, rights and freedoms, and comprehensive development.

The results achieved by the nine working groups and the decisions and the recommendations emanating from their deliberations will be discussed in the Conference over a period of two and a half months. Moreover, field visits are planned to the capital and 17 governorates all over the country, as are meetings with more than 11,000 personalities representing the different strata of society and its components, including private and public institutions and civil society organizations, with a view to conducting a vote to adopt all the decisions and recommendations.

President Mansour has taken a series of measures to establish trust and create an environment conducive to the success of the Dialogue and to achieving the desired results. Those steps have been met with popular and international satisfaction. On 10 April, President Mansour also took several decisions to reorganize the military situation in the country, to restructure and re-establish military zones, to appoint military commanders and to continue restructuring and reunifying the army on a genuinely modern and scientific basis, with a view to protecting constitutional legitimacy and to preserving the sovereignty of the State.

President Mansour has also issued presidential directives to provide all possible support to the two main committees considering various issues, including those related to land and idled public servants in the civil, security and military fields in the southern governorates, with a view to restoring rights and rectifying injustices a. quickly as possible. In addition, he has also issued directives to release a certain number of prisoners accused in a variety of cases with regard to the southern movement Hiraak.

In spite of all those accomplishments, Yemen is still facing great difficulties in various fields, the foremost of which are security imbalances and combating terrorism and subversive acts, such as the destruction of electrical lines and oil and gas pipes, that entail heavy losses for the national economy, which is already burdened, and have a negative impact on the lives of citizens. At the same time, the Government is doing its utmost to change the situation.

President Mansour has taken many bold and wise decisions with a view to implementing the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, its implementation mechanism and relevant Security Council resolutions. The political settlement in Yemen has entered an extremely delicate and pivotal phase, which requires the international community's continued support for the efforts of President Mansour and the Government of National Reconciliation, and its assistance to all the parties in leading the transitional stage to success and in preventing any party from obstructing the implementation of the Gulf initiative.

Political support is essential for Yemen, but it must also be accompanied by international development support with a view to implementing the stability and development transition plan for 2012-2014, thereby improving the living conditions of citizens. In that regard, we look forward to the realization of the pledges made at the donors conference held in Riyadh, and the meetings of the Group of Friends of Yemen, held in New York and London, with a view to supporting the efforts and programmes of the Government, which represent an extremely important element of stability in Yemen.

We also appeal to the international community to seriously support the 2013 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, since the humanitarian situation in Yemen represents a serious challenge to the Yemeni Government and in view of the fact that reports of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations active in the humanitarian field all indicate a grave humanitarian crisis in Yemen, particularly among the displaced persons.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to the Gulf initiative and its implementation mechanism, particularly the requirements of the second phase of the transitional process, the foremost of which are the comprehensive national dialogue, the drafting of the constitution and submitting it to a referendum, and the parliamentary and presidential elections, to be held in February 2014, with a view to realizing the aspirations of the Yemeni people to change, stability, security and prosperity.

We would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and his Special Adviser on Yemen, Mr. Jamal Benomar, for their efforts in support of the transitional process. We would also like to th ..nk the sponsors of the Gulf initiative and its implementation mechanism, including the five permanent members of the Security Council and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, foremost among which is brotherly Saudi Arabia, as well as the countries of the European Union and other brotherly and friendly countries that have stood by Yemen in these difficult times.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.